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The Forum Trust Fund

United Nations Trust Fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests

Note by the Secretariat**

Summary

The present note describes the programme activities of the Forum secretariat funded from the Trust Fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests during the biennium 2008-2009.

The generous contributions of donor countries to the Trust Fund are gratefully acknowledged. These contributions greatly facilitated the work of the Forum secretariat. Without them, many key activities would not have been possible.

* E/CN.18/2009/1.

** The delay in the issuance of the present note was due to the need to include updated information.

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I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 25 of its multi-year programme of work for the period 2007-2015 (resolution 7/1, annex), the United Nations Forum on Forests called upon interested donor Governments, financial institutions and other organizations to make voluntary financial contributions to the Forum Trust Fund. Other countries in a position to do so and other interested parties were also urged to contribute to the Trust Fund. In order to ensure transparency, the Forum requested the secretariat to report to the Forum at each session on the operation of the Trust Fund, including on the amount and source of contributions and a description of how funds were spent.

2. In the biennium 2008-2009, the Forum secretariat is programmed to carry out a series of activities financed by the Trust Fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests. All the activities related to General Assembly resolution 62/98, by which the Assembly adopted the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, or to the multi-year programme of work of the Forum for the period 2007-2015. The Trust Fund was also used to supplement funds from the regular budget (programme 7: Economic and social affairs, subprogramme 9: Sustainable forest management) in implementing the programme of work for the current biennium.

3. The generous contributions of the donor countries to the Trust Fund are gratefully acknowledged. These contributions greatly enhanced the work of the Forum secretariat and the present level of activities would not have been possible without them. More specifically, a substantial part of the activities of the secretariat in the biennium 2008-2009 were supported from the trust fund through: (a) consultancies; (b) cost of conference services for the ad hoc expert group meeting to develop proposals for the development of a voluntary global financial mechanism/portfolio approach/forest financing framework, held in Vienna from 11 to 14 November 2008, and the expert group meeting to be held in Rome on 12 and 13 March 2009; (c) travel of representatives of developing countries, particularly from the least developed countries and countries with economies in transition, to the eighth session of the Forum; (d) travel of staff to participate in various forest-related meetings and events; (e) support to the Bureau in preparing for future sessions of the Forum, in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2007/278; and (f) salaries of temporary staff members of the secretariat.

4. The 2008-2009 allotment from the Trust Fund amounts to $2,616,119, inclusive of programme support costs. The total contributions to the Trust Fund in 2008-2009 to date amount to $630,265, or approximately only one quarter of the funds needed to implement the programme of work for the 2008-2009 biennium.

II. Consultancies (on special service agreement basis)

5. In view of the human resource constraints in the Forum secretariat, additional support and expertise was needed to assist the secretariat in implementing the programme elements below:

Purpose of consultancy	*Relationship to programme element of 2008-2009 programme budget*
Two consultants were hired to provide expert advice during the ad hoc expert group meeting to develop proposals for the development of a voluntary global financial mechanism/portfolio approach/forest financing framework. One of the consultants also assisted the secretariat in preparing a background paper entitled "Financing for sustainable forest management: mobilizing financial resources to support the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and to promote sustainable forest management".	Programme budget 2008-2009, outputs 9.78 (a) (i) a and b (substantive servicing of meetings and parliamentary documentation) and 9.78 (a) (iii) (servicing of ad hoc expert groups).

III. Conference services for expert group meetings

6. According to United Nations rules, ad hoc expert group meetings do not carry the entitlement for interpretation services, which can be provided only on the basis of availability. As there were no interpretation services available for the planned meetings, the secretariat was required to cover these costs from the Trust Fund.

Description	*Relationship to programme element of 2008-2009 programme budget*
Cost of conference services at the United Nations Office at Vienna (11-14 November 2008), including for conference rooms, technical support and interpretation into all United Nations languages. Cost of interpretation for expert meeting to be held in Rome (12-13 March 2009).	Programme budget 2008-2009, output 9.78 (a) (i) a.

IV. Travel of experts and representatives from developing countries and countries with economies in transition

7. Travel assistance was provided to facilitate the participation of representatives of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the eighth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. Travel assistance was also provided for the representatives of major groups from developing countries to participate in the multi-stakeholder dialogue and in the eighth session of the Forum.

Purpose of travel of representatives	*Relationship to programme element of 2008-2009 programme budget*
United Nations Forum on Forests, eighth session, New York, 20 April-1 May 2009.	Programme budget 2008-2009, output 9.78 (a) (i) a.
Multi-stakeholder dialogue at the eighth session of the Forum.	Programme budget 2008-2009, outputs 9.78 (a) (i) a and (a) iii.

V. Travel of staff members of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests

8. Staff members of the secretariat participated in many key, forest-related events, including the Governing Council of the African Forest Forum, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Country-led Initiative on Financing for Sustainable Forest Management in Support of the United Nations Forum on Forests, meeting of global forest leaders on forest and climate change, the International Symposium on Sustainable Forest Management, the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission, the Partnership Forum on Climate Investment Funds, the first meeting to design a Forest Investment Programme, European Forest Week, the forty-fourth session of the International Tropical Timber Council, the United Nations Forum on Forests ad hoc expert group meeting to develop proposals for the development of a voluntary global financial mechanism/portfolio approach/forest financing framework, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Forest Day 2.

VI. Support to the Bureau in preparing for future sessions of the Forum

9. In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2007/278, support can be provided to members of the Bureau of the Forum from developing countries and countries with economies in transition to cover participation in at least one meeting a year of the Bureau held in or outside New York, from designated contributions to the Trust Fund. As at January 2009, one Member State had provided a designated contribution for that purpose.

VII. Temporary staff and general temporary assistance

10. Staff members at the Professional and other levels were engaged using the extrabudgetary resources of the Trust Fund. At the Professional level, temporary staff included one P-5, one P-4 and one P-3. General temporary assistance included two P-4 level staff members. Other levels included two General Service support staff members.

VIII. Contributions to the Trust Fund

11. The contributions to the Trust Fund for the period 2008-2009 are shown in the annex to the present document. At the time of preparing the present report, no contributions to the Trust Funds had been received in 2009.

Annex

Contributions to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2000-2009

(United States dollars)

Contributor	*2000-2001*	*2002-2003*	*2004-2005*	*2006-2007*	*2008-2009*	*Total*	*Percentage of total*
Australia	39 800			37 200	33 252	110 252	1.3
Austria		30 000	12 465	25 142		67 607	0.8
Canada	32 233			10 458		42 691	0.5
European Community		6 525				6 525	0.1
Finland	36 887	236 880		120 170	47 013	440 950	5.3
Germany		216 268	126 021	215 640		557 929	6.8
Luxembourg				17 898		17 898	0.2
Netherlands				254 298		254 298	3.1
Republic of Korea				40 000		40 000	0.5
Norway	38 124	13 957	47 553	99 970		199 604	2.4
Sweden		30 000	66 346			96 346	1.2
Switzerland		154 760	85 500		50 000	290 260	2.9
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland			18 801	103 030		121 831	1.5
United States of America	1 600 000	1 525 000	1 375 000	1 050 000	500 000	6 050 000	73.4
Grand total	**1 747 044**	**2 213 390**	**1 731 686**	**1 973 806**	**630 265**	**8 296 191**	**100**

Notes:

1. In 2008, the Government of Germany contributed $124,610 to the technical cooperation project on enhanced cooperation and regional programme coordination.
2. The Government of Finland contributed $336,641 to the cost of a Junior Programme Officer for a two-year period from 2004 to 2006 and $320,000 for a Junior Programme Officer starting in October 2008.
3. In addition, the Government of Finland also contributed $187,373 to the technical cooperation project on interregional cooperation and lessons learned on sustainable forest management (2004-2007).
4. The Government of the Netherlands contributed $140,000 to the technical cooperation project on enhanced cooperation and regional programme coordination in sustainable forest management in 2007.
5. The Government of Norway has stated its intention to contribute $52,000 to the Trust Fund.